



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

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Governor Blagojevich announces installation of first Memorial sign in honor of DUI victim, Tina Ball

IDOT officials are joined by Tina Ball's family and members of Task Force that backed law, allowing DUI memorial signs along IL highways

CHICAGO – As a result of Governor Rod R. Blagojevich's signing of "Tina's Law" this past August, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) today installed the first DUI memorial sign authorized under the new law in Chicago. The legislation allows DUI victims' family members to request that IDOT install the signs along Illinois highways. The sign erected along Interstate 57 near 111th St. is in memory of Tina Ball, a mother of seven and a road construction worker who was killed by a drunk driver while she was working on I-57 in Sept. 15, 2003.

A ceremony to mark the event was attended by Ball's family, IDOT and State Police officials, legislators, and members of a task force that supported the legislation, including Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown, members of the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists and officials from Tina Ball's union, the Laborers' International Union.

"Tina Ball died under tragic circumstances – she was a road construction worker who was killed by a drunk driver while earning a living to support her family," said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. "The Governor signed Tina's Law so family members can honor and memorialize their loved one and at the same time send a powerful message to the public at large about the deadly toll drunk drivers take on our society, and the fact that this is a crime we will not tolerate."

The new law allows relatives of DUI victims to request a memorial marker for any crash that occurred on or after January 1, 2003. The memorial markers are a 36 by 24 inch blue sign with

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white letters reading, "Please Don't Drink and Drive." At a relative's request, a separate 36 by 18 inch panel reading, "In Memory of (victim's name)," followed by the date of the crash, will be mounted below the primary sign.

"On September 15th 2003 my sister Tina Ball was killed by a drunk driver," said Ball's sister, Anna Johnson. "In her memory, we have worked very hard to make our roads safer. We hope that with these memorial markers in place, it will help remind people that dinking and driving does kill innocent people. If this can save one more life - may it be a mother, a daughter, a sister, a wife - then all our sadness will be put towards a positive step in eliminating drunk drivers from our roads."

"All too often, law enforcement officers observe first hand the devastation impaired drivers leave on families and our communities," said Director Larry G. Trent of the Illinois State Police. "Innocent victims have lost their lives because of these senseless and very preventable criminal actions. With the passage of 'Tina's Law,' memorial signs will be erected at the site of these tragic crashes and will serve as constant reminders to motorists of the heartbreaking consequences if they choose to drink and drive."

The Tina Ball Memorial DUI Task Force was instrumental in pushing for passage of Tina's Law, formally known as House Bill 1900. The bill's sponsors were Sen. Kirk Dillard (R-Hinsdale) and Rep. Susana Mendoza (D-Chicago).

"I learned of the commitment the Ball family had to strengthen laws against drunk drivers and promised to create a taskforce to help make "Tina's Law" a reality," said Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. "I was honored to be involved with the drafting of the bill. Mrs. Ball lost her life needlessly due to the actions of a drunk driver. I want to make sure that the Clerk's Office stay at the forefront in creating legislation that may help decrease drunken driving accidents and fatalities."

"I think this law will help families work through the grief of having a loved one killed by a drunk driver," said Senator Dillard. "These memorials will raise the public awareness of the harm inflicted by drunk drivers upon our society, and hopefully make people think twice before getting behind the wheel of a car after they have been drinking."

"I'm pleased that we can honor Tina Ball and so many other victims of senseless DUI deaths by the erection of these memorial markers," said Rep. Mendoza. "Hopefully, they'll serve as a stark reminder to motorists that driving while under the influence leads to fatal consequences. The names on the memorial signs belong to real people who leave behind loving families living with real sadness as a result of irresponsible drivers."

"After many years of trying to create an official sign program to memorialize victims of impaired driving crashes, the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) is pleased that we will now be able to remind drivers throughout the state of the dangers and consequences of this terrible crime," stated Charlene Chapman, AAIM Executive Director. "Currently, family and friends of crash victims often erect temporary makeshift memorials which are removed because they become unsightly and can be a distraction to other drivers."

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"This roadside marker program will provide both a memorial and a message. As an active member of the Tina Ball DUI Memorial Task Force, AAIM proposed this roadway sign program and we are all truly grateful to Governor Blagojevich, Cook County Circuit Court Clerk Dorothy Brown and the Illinois Department of Transportation for their dedicated support in creating this law."

Family members of DUI victims will be able to apply for memorial signs through IDOT district offices. Groups such as AAIM and MADD will be able to assist family members in obtaining and completing applications. There will be a \$150 fee for the "Don't Drink and Drive" sign and a \$50 fee for the plaque bearing the name of the victim.